

AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Mr. Gaughen

Canyon Crest Academy
San Dieguito Union High School District

Room: F206
email: michael.gaughen@sduhsd.net

Phone: 858-350-0253 X4196
Web: <http://teachers.sduhsd.net/mgaughen>

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

AP Language and Composition is a course designed to provide students access to the rigors and challenges of an introductory college-level course on composition and rhetoric. In this course, students will engage in close reading and frequent writing, thereby developing their ability to understand language and text with a greater awareness of purpose and strategy, while strengthening their own compositions. The primary goal of the course is to prepare students for the critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that will be demanded of them in all disciplines at the college level.

In this course, students will read and analyze a variety of non-fiction prose including but not limited to essays, speeches, editorials, articles, and academic journals. The course readings will come from various genres and cover modern and dated material. The readings will provide models of effective writing which students will study, analyze, and use as examples to facilitate their own writing strategies. Students will be introduced to the choices that effective communicators make in crafting the language of their text or speech when arguing, informing, persuading, or entertaining. Students will then engage in the analysis of those choices, techniques, devices, methods, and styles that the writers and speakers use currently and have used throughout history.

In this course, students will practice writing effectively for a range of audiences and a variety of purposes, demonstrate mastery of the conventions of standard written language, and use the steps of the writing process as needed. Students will experience both writing as process and writing on demand. For some essays, students will be encouraged to write and revise numerous drafts—receiving peer and instructor feedback; for other essays, students will be given a set amount of time to compose a well thought out draft in one sitting—similar to the AP Timed Writing Essays. Students will engage in imitative writing exercises designed to facilitate an understanding of how certain rhetorical strategies advance a writer's purpose. Over the course of the term, students will be encouraged and expected to find their own writing style and voice.

In training these students to be effective communicators, the focus of this course goes beyond simply reading and writing. Students will also be given a chance to learn skills in effective oral discourse. Students will be presented with issues and ideas, in a structured and safe environment, and allowed the opportunity to hear other students' points of view and to share their own. Students will be given the time to speak, knowing they will be heard and their ideas honored; and in turn will listen to those who might have opposing views. In addition, students will examine imagery as rhetoric, developing an understanding of the purpose of the message and the strategies employed by the creator to present that message.

As this is an AP Course, performance expectations are high and the workload is challenging. Students are expected to complete a minimum of five hours of course work a week outside of class. Outside work often involves long-term writing and reading assignments, in addition to regular homework assignments. Effective time management is important to be successful in this class.

The course is constructed in accordance with the guidelines described in the AP English Course Description, which can be found at:

<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/repository/ap-english-course-description.pdf>

Texts Used by Students

- Aaron, Jane E., ed. *The Compact Reader: Short Essays by Method and Theme, Seventh Edition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. Scribner, 1925.
- The Language of Literature: American Literature, Ninth Edition*. McDougall Littell, 2006.
- Miller, George, ed. *The Prentice Hall Reader, Seventh Edition*. Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2003.

Resources

- Browne, M. Neil and Stuart Keeley. *Asking The Right Questions, Sixth Edition*. Prentice Hall, 2001.
- Cohen, Samuel. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology, Third Edition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.
- Crusius, Timothy W. and Carolyn E. Channell. *The Aims of Argument, Sixth Edition*. McGraw Hill, 2009.
- Farnsworth, Ward. *Farnsworth's Classical English Rhetoric*. Godine, 2010.
- Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an Argument: with Readings, Fifth Edition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.
- McWhorter, Kathleen. *Seeing The Pattern*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.
- Shea, Renée, Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin Dissin Aufses. *The Language of Composition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Toulmin, Stephen E. *The Uses of Argument: Updated Edition*. Cambridge University Press, 2003.

COURSE PLANNER

The course is organized around three over-arching units; rhetorical analysis, argumentation, and synthesis. Within each over-arching unit there will be smaller units that focus on specific skill sets. In addition there will be ongoing units that will run concurrently with the three defined units.

Over-arching Unit One: Language Arts: the Identification, Understanding, and Purposes of Rhetoric

The first 8-10 weeks of the course will focus on the over-arching concept of rhetorical analysis. The length of this unit is a function of the benefits of understanding rhetorical analysis in the context of the demands of all college level writing. We begin with an introduction to close reading skills required in expository text analysis, the connection between reading and writing, and an introduction to the writing process required for the AP Course. Students will read a variety of materials in which they will begin identifying, defining, and recognizing various rhetorical and literary devices used in written, image-based, and spoken situations, while gaining an understanding of the effect of those devices. Most readings are teacher selected. With the close reading and analyzing of prose, students are encouraged to pay specific attention to subject, audience, purpose, exigency, speaker, and tone. Students will be taught how to compose the four sentence rhetorical précis on what they have read.

Students will engage in imitative writing assignments where they will mimic the prose style of published authors. The purpose of the imitation is to generate an awareness of rhetorical strategies by "doing." By imitating specific rhetorical strategies and incorporating them into their own prose, students can gain a sense of usage, placement, and most importantly purpose.

Students experience writing as a process, generating three papers from select writing modes. These will include at least three drafts per paper—one draft read and commented on by peers, the next draft read and commented on by the instructor, ending with a "final" draft (with the option to rewrite if necessary). The third paper culminates in a one-on-one conference with the instructor about the student's writing. The final drafts must be typed and students are required to keep all preliminary work leading up to the final draft.

The main focus of this process writing is to provide each student a chance to discover his/her voice and style. Much of the teacher feedback both before and after the final drafts will focus on the development of syntactical awareness (varying sentence structures, punctuation, and construction) and expanding the student's use and understanding of vocabulary appropriate to a wide range of settings, both formal and informal. During the writing process, students are encouraged (and required) to use various rhetorical devices and techniques in their own writing.

Students will begin practicing writing on demand for a set period of time (usually 40-50 minutes), by using previous AP Prompts and similar examples. Students are required to hand-write all timed writings. Students receive teacher feedback on how to structure, develop, organize, focus, and provide evidence for these timed writings. This feedback takes two forms--individually with comments on a specific student's paper and corporately with notes on common mistakes found as the teacher was reading the class's essays. The main focus of these timed writings is on prose analysis. At least one timed writing will focus on a contemporary piece, while at least one other timed writing will focus on a dated piece. Students are provided with samples of previous students' responses to the prompts, as a resource on how to structure and compose their own essays.

Students practice test-taking techniques with portions of previous AP English Language and Composition multiple-choice questions analyzing prose. However, many of these practice tests will be based on the essays read and studied in class.

Selected Readings

May include but are not limited to:

Ascher's "On Compassion"

Mairs' "I Am A Cripple"

Pyle's "On WWII"

Royko's "The Faceless Man"

Barry's "Lost In The Kitchen"

Swift's "A Modest Proposal"

King's "Letter From A Birmingham Jail"

Selections from *NYTimes Photography: Lens*

Writing Assignments

Imitative Writings: Single Word Definition, Description of an Object, Place, or Person (with rationales for rhetorical strategy choices)

Process Writings: Personal Statement Narrative, Compare/Contrast, Cause and Effect

Timed Writings: Rhetorical Analysis of a Modern Passage, Rhetorical Analysis of a Dated Passage

Overarching Unit Two: Everything is an Argument

The next 4-5 weeks of class will be devoted to analyzing and composing effective arguments and persuasive compositions.

Students are re-introduced to the Aristotelian concepts of logos, pathos, and ethos that were studied in the first unit, specifically in the application of constructing an argument. They will see how those three appeals actually work together in various speeches, essays, articles, editorials, and visual modes (such as editorial cartoons, magazine advertisements, etc.; as well as the use in current television news media reports and motion picture documentaries).

Students will be introduced to the Toulmin, Evidential Block, and Rogerian models of argument organization and the appropriate uses for each. Students will also learn the distinctions between deductive and inductive

reasoning and the distinctions between argument and persuasion. Students will be instructed in methodologies for accessing relevant outside sources for evidence. Students will be introduced to common logical fallacies and how those fallacies affect an argument. They will be able to identify fallacies in various speeches, essays, articles, editorials, and visual modes, as they analyze these examples of arguments. They will also practice writing their own arguments—in the forms of timed writings and process writing.

Students will experience argument writing as a process. Students will write one research-based argument paper that will have at least three drafts—one draft read and commented on by peers, the next draft read and commented on by the instructor, ending with a “final” draft (with the option to rewrite if necessary). Students will have the opportunity to schedule a conference with the instructor. The final drafts must be typed and students are required to keep all preliminary work leading up to the final draft. The main focus of this process writing is to have students begin to incorporate outside sources into their own work, using MLA style in citing sources. They are to continue writing with the goal of discovering their own voice and style. During the writing process, students are encouraged (and required) to use various rhetorical devices and techniques in their own writing, along with appeals and an absence of fallacies.

Students will continue the practice of writing on demand, utilizing previous AP essay prompts and the UC AWPE prompt, in a set amount of time (about 40 minutes). The prompts will give them the opportunity to analyze, qualify, concur, or challenge a specific argument or arguments; or the prompts will provide the opportunity to create their own arguments using the appeals and avoiding the fallacies. Students will receive instructor’s feedback on these timed writings and be shown examples of previous students’ responses.

Students will be provided the opportunity to participate in several “Four Corners Discussions”—where students are given a specific topic and asked to sit in one of the following areas (agree, strongly agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) based on their position on the topic; then each group is allowed to speak and explain their rationales without the fear of being interrupted or challenged; the instructor acts as facilitator, making sure that the discussion stays focused; students are not allowed to write anything down, but must listen to all sides. The objective is to establish a safe environment for open discourse.

Selected Readings

May include but are not limited to:

Talbot’s “Best In Class”

Hennig and Robertson’s “What Is A Civil Union?”

Dershowitz’s “Testing Speech Codes”

Martin’s “On Teenagers And Tattoos”

Selections from *Arts and Letter Daily*

Writing Assignments

Imitative Writing: Persuasive Essay based on columnist (see Columnist Project)

Process Writing: Research Based Argument Essay (see Synthesis Project)

Timed Writings: Argument Essay based on The University of California AWPE, Argument Essay based on AP exam

Overarching Unit Three: Synthesis: Putting It All Together

The final 4-5 weeks of the course provide the students the opportunity to utilize and incorporate all of the skills, devices, techniques, appeals, etc. taught and practiced in the first two units. They will be encouraged to “put it all together” in their own writing and in their analysis of other writers’ and speakers’ works. Students are encouraged and expected to continue to use their own individual voice, tone, and style as they write.

Students will be given the opportunity to practice constructing shorter synthesis essays on various topics. The format will be similar to AP Exam Prompt in which they construct a synthesis essay. They will be given a combination of several short readings, graphs, or visual aids and asked to synthesize ideas from at least 3-4 of those “readings” into a nicely structured and argued essay, being sure to cite those sources correctly. These essays will be written on demand for a set period of time (usually 50 minutes). Students will receive feedback on these papers.

Students will continue to analyze writings, focusing on the rhetorical strategies at play. They will be asked to continue to pay close attention to subject, audience, purpose, speaker, and tone.

As part of this unit, students will also be required to research and compile a sample AP Synthesis Prompt of their own. This will require that students be able to evaluate primary and secondary sources for credibility, authenticity, and relevance to their chosen topic. As part of the project, the students will write an essay that takes a position on the prompt and utilize the sources they have gathered to defend their position with special attention to proper citation style.

Selected Readings

May include but are not limited to:

Gould’s “Women’s Brains”

Angier’s “Drugs, Sports, Body Image, and G.I. Joe”

Birkerts’ “Into the Electronic Millennium”

Moe’s “Battling Teardowns; Saving Neighborhoods” (speech)

Selections from *Arts and Letter Daily*

Writing Assignments

Process Writing: Research based Synthesis Essay (see Synthesis Project)

Timed Writings: Synthesis Essay based on the AP exam

Concurrent Units

Columnist Project

In the first few weeks of the course, students will begin an individualized study of one particular op-ed columnist from a newspaper or magazine—with a special focus on the writer’s style, tone, and voice. Students will generate a dialectical journal or utilize marginalia to annotate the articles, noting the rhetorical strategies employed by the columnist. During the Argument unit, students will generate their own persuasive essay utilizing strategies found in the columnists work. Students will be presented with the opportunity to have this essay published in either the regional or school newspaper.

Synthesis Project

In the first few weeks of the course, students will select and read a larger non-fiction piece (such as Erhenrich’s *Nickel and Dimed*, or Greenslate and Leonard’s *On A Dollar A Day*). While reading the material, students will generate a dialectical journal or utilize marginalia to annotate the work. In addition, students will be required to read additional sources from a list of requirements that include academic journals, editorials, critical reviews, etc. Students will then generate a synthesis paper that analyzes both the rhetorical strategies employed by the author and the effectiveness of the author’s argument. During the Argument Unit, students will submit the argument analysis portion of the project as a unified essay. During the Synthesis Unit, students will revise the document and include the Rhetorical Analysis. In all drafts, students will incorporate outside sources with proper MLA or APA format.

COURSE POLICIES

Grading

Each assignment that counts toward a student's grade will be scored on a point scale. The kind of assignment and the size of the assignment will determine the point total. A standard, ten-point scale (shown below) can be used to figure a grade from that total. This scale is also used to determine a student's report grade.

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

D = 60-69%

F = 0-59%

Assignments are pre-weighted according to their kind and size. Thus, an essay is worth more than a project segment, and a project segment is worth more than an individual test or quiz. However, the combined total of a project is worth more than an essay. Total semester grades are compiled using the approximate percentages listed below:

Writing and Projects– 70% Includes Projects, Take Home Essays, Timed Writes, Imitative Writings

Tests and quizzes – 20% Includes Course Material Quizzes and AP Style Multiple Choice Tests

Participation – 10% Includes Discussions, Standing Quizzes, and Four Square Debates

Please note that due to the subjective nature of English courses, these percents are approximate and are to serve as a guideline. Sometimes it becomes necessary to add or delete a planned assignment based on the educational needs of a particular class. Students will be fully aware of the weight of any given assignment. Point totals will be given to students before assignments.

Writing Assignments and Projects

All writing assignments in this course will be scored using a nine-point rubric, similar to the rubric employed by the College Board on AP exams. Each writing assignment may have a specific valuation based on the skills being assessed. As such, each writing assignment will likely have its own specific rubric. A translation of AP scoring into letter grades follows:

9= A; 8= A-; 7= B+; 6= B; 5= C; 4= D; 3= D-; 2-1= F

The letter grades are an approximation and do not reflect the actual amount of points entered into the gradebook.

Tests and Quizzes

Course Material Quizzes will follow the standard 10-point grading scale noted above. They will include assessments on understanding rhetorical terminology, argumentation terminology, etc. AP multiple-choice style exams present a greater degree of difficulty and therefore will employ a modified scale:

100-85%=A; 84-75%=B; 74-65%=C; 64-55%=D; 54% or below=F

Participation

Active participation is essential to engaging and understanding the concepts of language and composition in. Students will have ample opportunity to participate via guided discussion, standing quizzes, and four square debates. This course is an educational bank account; you only get out what you put in.

Submitting Work

Students will take full responsibility for their education. Putting forth effort and adhering to deadlines are two simple ways students can create and maintain successful study habits.

Homework will account for an average of one (1) hour per evening, or five (5) hours per week. Stay on top of homework or come see me if time management problems begin to occur. The demands of the AP curriculum combined with the speed of the 4X4 schedule does not permit me to utilize my reputed "no weekend homework" policy.

Late work is not accepted.

However, if you have an excused absence, you have as many days as the absence to complete the work, per district policy. What this means, however, is if an assignment was due on Tuesday and you were absent Tuesday, the DAY YOU RETURN is the day it is due for you.

All homework is due at the beginning of class. Process papers will be submitted via turnitin.com. Students are responsible for their own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. For specifics, read the *Plagiarism And Academic Honesty* document attached to this syllabus.

This course does not currently have any extra credit opportunities.

Video Permission

Video is a medium that can provide a wonderful enhancement of the English curriculum. This class will use video as an instructional tool, looking at the combined aspect of verbal and visual rhetoric. A very short list of R rated movies has been pre-approved by the board. Should one of our units benefit instructionally from the viewing of a pre-approved R-rated movie, a parent permission slip will be sent home prior to viewing. Students who do not return the form in the prescribed amount of time will be given an alternative assignment. I do recognize that liberties are taken in today's film industry in the name of "art." I therefore have selected only videos that are complementary to the unit of study as instructional tools. Possible titles (but not limited to these) are:

Gasland
Food, Inc
Shouting Fire
Supersize Me
Bowling for Columbine
The Great Gatsby

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

(Borrowed, in part, from policies established by the University of Washington's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Mr. Lockhart's Academic Honesty Policy for Social Science courses at Canyon Crest Academy.)

Cheating, or academic misconduct, is increasingly a problem amongst high school students. Regardless of motivation, cases of academic misconduct are completely unjustified in every instance. To cheat is to demean your efforts. It causes your character to come under suspicion, and it belittles the hard work of all students. Cheating, plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, in any form, is not tolerated. Note that these policies refer only to how plagiarism is viewed within the confines of this classroom. These do not supersede the Academic Dishonesty policies initiated by SDUHSD in any way.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

1. Using another author's words without proper citation
2. Using an author's ideas without proper citation
3. Reproducing the exact wording of another source without using quotation marks, even if the source is cited
4. Borrowing the structure of another author's words or phrases without proper credit or citation
5. Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or assignment, including borrowing the structure of another student's words, phrases, or ideas.
6. Using a paper writing service, or an online source of written assignments, or having another student complete an assignment. This includes obtaining information, either in full or in part, from Internet websites (popularly known as "paper mills"), in which students can obtain papers either free or for cost).
7. Cheating during a quiz or an exam, including:
 - Copying answers from another student
 - Possession of unauthorized notes or study-aids during a quiz or exam
8. Turning in work that is identical, or substantially similar to, the work of another student:
 - This is frequently a by-product of "working with another student." In many cases, working with a partner while studying is a beneficial way of learning. However, please understand that submitting work that is identical—or quite similar to—the work of another student is considered cheating. All work should be uniquely your own.
9. Purchasing or possessing materials that contain specific answers to specific homework assignments or exams.

Any infraction not described above, but that clearly falls under the auspices of academic dishonesty, is subject to the consequences in the Discipline Policy outlined by Canyon Crest Academy and the San Dieguito Union High School District.

Students who engage in academic misconduct will incur the following consequences:

1. The student WILL lose credit for the assignment.
2. The student WILL be referred to an administrator for documentation and for possible disciplinary action.

For more information, see the SDUHSD Academic Honesty Policy. Careful planning and time management will serve as good tools to prevent instances of academic misconduct. Please do not engage in any action that will cause your integrity to be questioned.

SIGNATURE PAGE

By signing this document, students and parents acknowledge receipt and understanding of the information contained in this syllabus. This course has been authorized by the College Board to use the AP designation, which allows the course to appear on student transcripts as an AP course. As such, the course has academic rigor and opportunity for students that are consistent with a college level writing and composition course. Students and parents acknowledge that the demands for this course are college level.

It is critical that students begin the process of taking charge of their own education. As such, students should be in regular contact with their instructors regarding performance requirements. While it is important for parents to be informed and I welcome open communication with parents, the initial contact regarding performance should be initiated by the student.

Student Name

Student Signature

Parent Name

Parent Signature

Contact Preference

Parent Contact (optional)

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