

Intention, Technique and Tone in Literature: Humankind's Examination of Self through Literature

Advanced Placement Overview

The senior year Advanced Placement Program in English is quite demanding and is, by definition, equivalent to a freshman Honors English course in college. The course requires active reading and the perceptive examination of literature as well as the mastery of all elements of composition, style, theme and technique. Students participating in this program engage in intensive critical reading and analysis of works chosen for literary merit, complexity of thought, intricacy of structure and richness of style. Several critical and/or researched-based essays focusing on literature are required; in addition, there will be exams on the units studied and in-class essays. The course is organized by genre, offering readings in fiction, poetry and drama from around the world and from many different periods of literature, largely from the 16th century to the present. Students will strive to comprehend artistry and social and historical context through several critical "lenses" and write to analyze and/or present arguments. A seminar approach is used, but teacher-directed instruction will also take place from time to time. To prepare students for the AP Exam in English Literature and Composition, the teacher will administer AP exams previously given by the College Board in addition to several multiple choice and essay practice sessions provided to students over the course of the year.

The Advanced Placement Program

The Advanced Placement Program is a collaborative effort among motivated students, dedicated teachers and committed high schools, colleges and universities that allows high school students to earn college credit or placement while still in high school. The corresponding exam for this course is the English Literature and Composition AP exam. Taking this exam is the expected outcome of taking this course; it is the culminating assessment. However, students who take this course are not *required* to take the English Literature and Composition AP exam, **but are highly encouraged to do so**. Although the specific college courses that AP credit will satisfy differ from college to college, each exam represents a year's college-level work (up to two semesters of credit). [Condensed and summarized from: <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>.]

Assessments:

Writing

Exams

In-class essays

Quizzes

Critical Essays

Research reports

Sample AP Exam

Projects

Seminar Presentation

Dialectic Response

Annotated Bibliography

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Mid-Year Exam

The Seminar Approach

Students act as daily discussion leaders for assigned readings, first in small teams and later individually, and the instructor acts as facilitator. Students receive evaluations based on both their seminar presentations and interactions with other student presenters.

Course Overview

The basic goal of this course is to learn how to read carefully and critically analyze imaginative literature. Literature is largely about intent, technique and tone. What is an author's intent? What techniques does he employ to achieve his purpose(s)? How is tone used as an overriding tool to achieve purpose? The historical and societal context of literary works will be discussed as essential to the understanding of literature. This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the *AP English Course Description*; however, Advanced Placement English is not merely a means for doing well on the AP Literature and Composition exam. It is also a senior honors English class, so while students will be preparing for the exam throughout the year, they will also be engaged in higher-level learning. Students will be responding to literature formally through research and writing and informally through written and verbal response. Students will also be reading about writing: authors writing about their own and other writing and scholarly, critical, analytical material. Class will be run essentially in the format of a college course. Student/student and student/teacher interaction will be at the forefront of all class time. Students will participate in Socratic seminars, student guided learning sessions, student presentation, teacher presentation, debate, discussion, etc. Some time will be allowed for in-class writing. Students will also spend time completing timed writing assignments, sample multiple choice exercises and discussing strategies for success on the AP Literature and Composition exam. Students will examine the human condition throughout the history of humankind by reading literature, which has always been the chief method mankind has used to understand his place in the world.

Essential Questions for the Course:

- How does an author convey theme through the techniques associated with genre?
- What are some of the universal themes consistent throughout all literature, regardless of time and place?
- Can the self be considered within the construct and constraints of society?
- How are intention, technique and tone crucial concepts in the construction and analysis of literature?
- How do structure and style affect the delivery of literary purpose?
- How does figurative language contribute to the larger picture?
- What is the role of literary criticism and what are the schools of literary criticism?
- What effects do social, historical and philosophical context have on a piece of literature?

Students will examine these questions in several different modes or genres: drama, short story, novel, poetry and non-fiction. The literature we read will also be classified by theme as well. Students will develop or sharpen the skills necessary to discover purpose in different thematic groupings.

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Course Objectives:

Students will:

1. Read, write, research, take notes and think critically at a sophisticated level.
2. Read a variety of literary works in all genres in a careful and analytical fashion.
3. Read, understand, and evaluate critical/scholarly material and respond in writing and verbally.
4. Write in different modes demonstrating scaffolded levels of understanding.
5. Create sound theses and use evidence to support theses.
6. Communicate learning through writing and oral presentation.
7. Work with peers and their teacher in the writing process.
8. Understand tone, technique and purpose in literature and their own writing.
9. Study schools of criticism and understand the importance of context in literature and critique.
10. Construct logical and well-supported arguments verbally and in writing.

The AP Exam (from apcentral.collegeboard.com):

Yearly, the AP English Literature Development Committee prepares a three-hour exam that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the skills and abilities previously described. The AP English Literature and Composition Exam employs multiple-choice questions that test the student's critical reading of selected passages. But the exam also requires writing as a direct measure of the student's ability to read and interpret literature and to use other forms of discourse effectively. Although the skills tested in the exam remain essentially the same from year to year, each year's exam is composed of new questions. The essay is scored by college and AP English teachers using standardized procedures. Ordinarily, the exam consists of 60 minutes for (55) multiple-choice questions (on both prose passages and poetry) followed by 120 minutes for (3) essay questions. Performance on the essay section of the exam counts for 55 percent of the total grade; performance on the multiple-choice section, 45 percent.

Essay Writing:

Students will write 8-12 formal essays over the course of the year, 4-6 per semester. Students may seek help before school every day for pre-writing, advice or editing prior to essay due dates. Also, the re-writing process is a very real and encouraged part of the course. Students are encouraged to work with their AP teacher before *and* after an essay is graded. Students will be provided with ample written feedback on all of their essays and a complete guide to the teacher's proofreading marks. Teacher-made changes equal zero learning, so edits are designed to stimulate a dialogue between the teacher and the student about opportunities for growth and improvement in any essay. Essay format and expectations will be clearly and firmly established early on in the course, and students, with some guidance, will be required to choose their own essay topics and theses germane to the current theme. Student will be able to, through their writing, show understanding, explain and evaluate. Writing assignments will require explication and/or research.

Writing Modes:

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- Timed Response
- AP Open Response
- Argumentation
- Causality
- Comparison
- Definition
- Analysis (literary)
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Primary Textbook:

The Norton Introduction to Literature
Ninth Edition
Alison Booth, *University of Virginia*
J. Paul Hunter, *University of Virginia*
Kelly J. Mays, *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*
0-393-92614-1 2005

Major Works for Consideration

The Power and the Glory by Graham Greene

The Medea by Euripides

Native Son by Richard Wright

Hamlet

Light in August [or] *The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner

Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison

Macbeth [or] *King Lear*

As You Like It, *Much Ado About Nothing* or *The Taming of the Shrew*

Candide by Voltaire

Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Our Man in Havana by Graham Greene

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Sula, *Beloved* [or] *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

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Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka:

Kokoro by Natsume Soseki:

Tartuffe [or] *The Misanthrope* by Molière:

The Alchemist [or] *Volpone* by Ben Johnson

Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard

Themes:

Themes in this class will not necessarily be covered in order but will be considered as modes or classifications of literature. Themes will come up again and again over the course of the year, and by allowing this fluid progress it will create a more natural discovery process for students.

Theme One: Writing Strategies and Rhetorical Techniques

Theme Two: The Human Condition/Examination of the Self

- Hamlet
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead
- One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich
- Heart of Darkness

Theme Three: The Outcast

- The Power and the Glory
- Native Son

Theme Four: Social Reconstruction/Criticism

- Light in August
- Invisible Man
- Pride and Prejudice
- Sula, Beloved or The Bluest Eye
- Death of a Salesman

Theme Five: Satire/Comedy

- Candide

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- As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing or The Taming of the Shrew
- Slaughterhouse Five
- Our Man in Havana
- Tartuffe or The Misanthrope
- The Alchemist or Volpone

Theme Six: Humans in Conflict

- King Lear
- The Glass Menagerie
- Metamorphosis

Theme Seven: Revenge

- Medea
- Macbeth
- Kokoro

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These themes will also be explored through readings and poems in the textbook. *The Norton Introduction to Literature* is a college textbook. Some of the explanatory material may be review for AP students while much of it is very valuable as new information. Selected readings from the text based on the following organization will be assigned, and this outline will provide an order of progress for the course:

I. Reading, Responding, Writing

II. Understanding Fiction

- Plot
- Narration And Point Of View
- Character
- Setting
- Symbol
- Theme
- The Whole Text

III. Exploring Contexts

- The Author's Body Of Work As Context
- Genre As Context
- Form As Context
- Culture And History As Context
- Critical Context

IV. Understanding Poetry

- Tone
- Speaker
- Situation And Setting
- Language
- Sounds Of Poetry
- Internal Structure
- External Form
- The Whole Text

V. Exploring Contexts

- The Poet's Body Of Work As Context
- Genre As Context
- Form As Context
- Culture And History As Context
- Critical Context

VI. Understanding Drama

- Elements Of Drama
- The Whole Text

VII. Exploring Contexts

- The Author's Body Of Work As Context
- Genre As Context
- Form As Context
- Culture And History As Context
- Critical Context
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VIII. Writing About Literature

- Paraphrase, Summary And Description
- The Elements Of The Essay
- The Writing Process
- The Research Essay
- Quotation, Citation And Documentation
- Looking At A Sample

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Universal Themes in Literature

1. The Individual in Nature

- a. Nature is at war with each of us and proves our vulnerability.
- b. People are out of place in Nature and need technology to survive.
- c. People are destroying nature and themselves with uncontrolled technology.

2. The Individual in Society

- a. Society and a person's inner nature are always at war.
- b. Social influences determine a person's final destiny.
- c. Social influences can only complete inclinations formed by Nature.
- d. A person's identity is determined by place in society.
- e. In spite of the pressure to be among people, an individual is essentially alone and frightened.

3. An Individual's Relation to the Gods.

- a. The god(s) are benevolent and will reward human beings for overcoming evil and temptation.
- b. The gods mock the individual and torture him or her for presuming to be great.
- c. The gods are jealous of and constantly thwart human aspiration to power and knowledge.
- d. The gods are indifferent toward human beings and let them run their undetermined course.
- e. There are no gods in whom people can place their faith or yearning for meaning in the universe.

4. Human Relations

- a. Marriage is a perpetual comedy bound to fail.
- b. Marriage is a relationship in which each partner is supported and enabled to grow.
- c. An old man marrying a young woman is destined to be a cuckold.
- d. Parents should not sacrifice all for a better life for their children.
- e. There are few friends who will make extreme sacrifices.

5. Growth and Initiation

- a. A boy and a girl must go through a special trial or series of trials before maturing.
- b. Manhood or womanhood is often established by an abrupt, random crisis, sometimes at an unusually early age.
- c. Aspects of childhood are retained in all of us, sometimes hindering growth, sometimes providing the only joy in later life.
- d. A person grows only in so far as he or she must face a crisis of confidence or identity.

6. Time

- a. Enjoy life now, for the present moment, because we all die too soon.
- b. By the time we understand life, there is too little left to live.

7. Death

- a. Death is part of living, giving life its final meaning.
- b. Death is the ultimate absurd joke on life.
- c. There is no death, only a different plane or mode of life without physical decay.
- d. Without love, death often appears to be the only alternative to life.

8. Alienation

- a. An individual is isolated from fellow human beings and foolishly tries to bridge the gaps.
- b. Through alienation comes self-knowledge.

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c. Modern culture is defective because it doesn't provide a group tie which in primitive cultures makes alienation virtually impossible.

More Generic Universal Themes

abuse of power	manipulation
action vs apathy	mothering
beating the odds	nature
beauty	need for change
coming of age	obligation
corruption	parent-child relationships
courage	peace
effects of the past	peer pressure
faith	perseverance
fall from grace	power of the mind vs. authority
family	prejudice
fate	price of progress
fear	pride
fear of failure	quest for knowledge
freedom	religion
friendship	revenge
greed	secrecy
hate	security/safety
heritage	seizing the moment
heroes	survival
honesty	the overlooked
innocence	the road not taken
justice	war
love	winners and losers
loyalty	

An Introduction to Literary Theory

An essential part of this course will be an introduction to literary theory. Students will in groups and individually and through lecture learn about current trends in literary criticism, including the following schools:

- Structuralism
- Post-Structuralism
- Deconstruction
- Postmodernism
- Freudian/Psychoanalytic Criticism
- Feminist Criticism
- Lesbian/Gay Criticism
- Marxist Criticism
- New Historicism/Cultural Materialism
- Postcolonial Criticism

After they familiarize themselves with these new lenses, they will experiment with them, using them as modes of literary analysis. Students will begin with a small piece and work towards larger goals such as the analysis of short story, drama and the novel.

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The Seminar Experience [http://www.case.edu/sages/sem_experience.htm]

As a setting for inquiry, the seminar is difficult to surpass. Human beings, it seems, are hard-wired to learn by talking together in small groups. We thrive intellectually when we have the chance to generate ideas in the course of conversation, to reassess our customary views, and to participate actively in the generation of knowledge. Moreover, the seminar experience provides a foundation for successful learning elsewhere. By fostering habits of reflection and appreciation for diverse perspectives, the seminar prepares students to excel in their courses generally, in their capstone projects, and in their future careers.

Students value the seminar experience partly because it honors their individuality—their personal responses to texts and issues. Yet its strategy for accomplishing this is to create a community. The seminar is small enough so that everyone can be heard, and the participants commit themselves to listening as well as speaking. In this setting, the instructors' delicate task is to serve as guides and exemplars without detracting from the seminar's egalitarian spirit.

Students in a seminar share a distinctive theory of knowledge. They do not suppose that any one authority will settle all questions or furnish them with a definitive account of the world. Instead, they conceive of knowledge as something to be gathered from multiple sources, and then subjected to rigorous scrutiny and comparative analysis. This intellectual work is the defining feature of the seminar experience. The participants seek to build knowledge communally, to develop a framework that will elicit broad agreement, without asserting coercive power over dissenters. “I liked the fact that the teachers were not telling us what to think,” one First Seminar student remarked. “Instead, we were drawing from each other's views.”

Free-flowing conversation is essential to a seminar. The participants' theory of knowledge requires it: Any discussion of a given text will naturally incorporate ideas from other sources. In a SAGES seminar, those sources may include personal experience, outside readings, non-SAGES classes, and visits to University Circle institutions.

This is not to say that seminars are devoid of structure. For instance, successful seminar leaders allow time for students to reflect on the winding paths a conversation has taken. They seek to integrate all that's been said into meaningful (if not always harmonious) patterns. They may even lecture briefly to provide the groundwork for a discussion. Though lecturing cannot be the default mode of seminar communication, our respect for diverse sources of knowledge prevents us from saying that a lecture is always out of place. Indeed, an insightful lecture *about* the seminar, by Michael Kahn, has found a receptive audience within SAGES:

www.sonoma.edu/users/m/mccaffry/libs320A_Immigrant/seminar.kahn.html

This guide to the seminar experience owes much to Kahn's demanding yet exhilarating conception; to the work of Case's Learning Research Team, which is engaged in an ongoing evaluation of the SAGES program; and to a conversation with Dr. Mano Singham, a SAGES seminar leader, principal researcher in the Department of Physics, and director of the University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education (UCITE) at Case.

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Name: _____

Teacher: _____

	Criteria				Points
	4	3	2	1	
Attendance / Promptness	Student is always prompt and regularly attends classes.	Student is late to class occasionally but regularly attends classes.	Student is late to class frequently but regularly attends classes.	Student is late to class more than once a week and/or has poor attendance of classes.	_____
Level Of Engagement In Class	Student proactively contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions more than once per class.	Student proactively contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions once per class.	Student rarely contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions.	Student never contributes to class by offering ideas and asking questions.	_____
Listening Skills	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others.	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class.	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class.	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student often interrupts when others speak.	_____
Behavior	Student almost never displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student rarely displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student occasionally displays disruptive behavior during class.	Student almost always displays disruptive behavior during class.	_____
Preparation	Student is almost always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is usually prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	Student is almost never prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.	_____
				Total---->	_____