

**Syllabus: AP English Language and Composition**  
**Grayling High School**  
**Grayling, MI 49738**  
**Instructor: Chris Lackenbucher**

The purpose of this course is to help students to read critically, think analytically, and communicate clearly in both writing and speech. The course is organized according to the requirements and guidelines of the current AP English Course Description.

**Learning Target:**

AP English Language and Composition is a college-level course examining rhetoric as “the art of finding and analyzing all the choices involving language that a writer, speaker, reader, or listener might make in a situation so that the text becomes meaningful, purposeful, and effective for readers or listeners, and examining the specific features of texts, written or spoken, that cause them to be meaningful, purposeful, and effective for readers or listeners in a situation” (David Jolliffe, former AP exam creator). Therefore, students will become mature and sophisticated readers and writers of many different kinds of texts.

**Through the course, students will understand:**

- what they read: the main point or thesis, context, the author’s purpose, author’s tone and style
- how a text develops meaning and purpose, including genre, organization, paragraphing, syntax
- the purpose of academic intellectual prose, its meaning and effect
- how to articulate their analysis of what they read; how structure, diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language form the meaning of a text
- how to create, develop, and support an argument that incorporates the complexities and nuances of debatable issues
- developing awareness of public discourse issues
- how to enter into a conversation with sources and develop a thesis and argument or exposition by synthesizing these conversations into their own writing
- how to analyze and incorporate their analysis of visual texts into their writing
- effective research skills and proper MLA citation
- how to read a question, so they know exactly how to approach it
- how to enhance vocabulary as a means to effective writing; how to grapple with archaic prose
- strategies necessary for success on the AP English Language and Composition exam

Students should become aware of how writers' linguistic choices create effective writing and achieve stylistic effects as well as how to incorporate these techniques into their own writing.

**Required Texts:**

Barron's AP English Language and Composition, 6th Edition

Heinrichs, Jay – Thank You for Arguing,

The Norton Reader 14th Edition,

Malcolm Gladwell—Outliers: The Story of Success

John Steinbeck—Grapes of Wrath

Richard Wright—Native Son

- Students are not required to take the AP exam but are strongly encouraged because it is the culminating activity of the course.
- All students must take the practice exams which will be administered in January, March and April—after spring break. This will emulate the actual testing experience.
- Homework is due at the beginning of the period. iPad issues are not valid excuses for late work.
- Successful students will attend class regularly and on time. Students will not violate the attendance requirements, or they will bear the repercussion of the school policy of credit loss.
- Students will bring required materials, complete homework assignments, participate in class discussions, and respect the opinions of others.
  
- All final drafts of major written assignments are to be typed in Google Docs and shared with instructor and must adhere to the essay format (MLA) unless otherwise specified.
- Cell phones may not be brought to class.
- Grading scale is per school-wide : 90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D, 59 and below F.
  
- Cheating and plagiarism on schoolwork will result in a zero on the assignment and will result in a disciplinary referral.

**Major Writing Assignments:**

- **Analytical Essay:** Students compose a rhetorical analysis from a prompt focusing on one of the class readings.
- **Personal Narrative:** Students compose an effective essay focusing on the significance of a single event in their lives.
- **Compare/Contrast Essay:** Students compose an essay from a prompt derived from Julius Caesar. Students will contrast the rhetorical strategies used by Antony and Brutus when addressing the citizens of Rome.
- **Election/Current Issue Project:** Students will analyze the rhetorical skills of a candidate's stump speech, or the rhetorical points and skills of a sitting politician .
- **Columnist Project:** Students will gather six editorials from a columnist of their choice. For each column, they submit a précis summarizing the column as well as a single paragraph reaction to it. Finally, they compose a response by developing an argument inspired through "conversations" with the columnist.

- **Synthesis Essay:** Students synthesize materials from a number of sources (including visual), develop an argument and compose an argumentative essay.
- **Open Topic/Genre Essay:** Using the five canons of rhetoric – invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery – students compose a meaningful essay on the topic of their choice. Students must submit a self-annotated copy of the essay highlighting the rhetorical strategies they incorporated. They will share their papers by presenting them to the class.
- **Research Paper:** Students experience the research process from discovering a topic and developing a research question to submitting the final product. Students will understand all levels of the process including discerning relevant sources, gathering information from diverse sources, synthesizing that information, and properly formatting the paper, incorporating MLA citation techniques. This paper may be expository or argumentative. Note:
- **Each essay** composed outside of class must include a **self evaluation** addressing the following questions:
  1. Did you stick with your original topic or did you change it along the way? Why?
  2. What problems did you encounter during the process of creating the essay?
  3. List two of the most important changes you made. Why did you make them?
  4. What part of the current essay writing experience will you use or reference in improving as a writer?
- Rough drafts of essays will be peer-edited.
- As major assessments, the mid-term and open topic essays require students to annotate their own texts highlighting the intentional strategies they incorporated
- Students are encouraged to conference with me prior to submitting final drafts
- In-class Timed Essays – Responding to AP or AP-like Prompts: During the course of the year, students are regularly required to respond to a prompt under time constraints. These papers are assessed on the 0-9 AP scale, with a score of 5 equivalent to 75 points and 9 to 100 points.
- Additional assessments include **vocabulary quizzes**, multiple-choice tests and exercises, and the major exam for the course: a complete AP English Language test during TCAP week duplicating the testing conditions of the actual exam. Students are required to take this practice exam.

### **SUMMER READING SELECTIONS:**

Eighner, Lars: “On Dumpster Diving”

Mairs, Nancy: “On Being a Cripple” The Norton Reader pp. 59-68

McMurtry, John: “Kill ‘Em! Crush ‘Em! Eat ‘Em Raw” The Norton Reader pp. 354-359

Rauch, Jonathan: “In Defense of Prejudice” The Norton Reader pp. 680-688

Note: This syllabus is tentative because we will also analyze texts focusing on public discourse issues. Units one through five are six weeks long. Additionally, consistent writing to prompts and multiple-choice exercises supplement the major writing projects. Each unit in AP English Language and Composition builds on the previous unit, so learning goals are cumulative and will be addressed consistently throughout the course.

**Unit 1 Understanding Rhetoric Learning Goals:** Students will understand:

- the significance of rhetorical analysis by: defining rhetoric and the rhetorical situation according to Bitzer: exigence audience and constraints;
- the analysis of persona and tone;
- the rhetorical matrix: the elements of an effective text
- close reading and annotation
- how to discern the differences in approaches in certain texts targeted to specific audiences
- the significance of audience in the development of a text;
- formal academic writing;
- how to transcend the 5-paragraph “theme”

**Readings:**

Bitzer: “The Rhetorical Situation”

Clinton: “Lewinsky Speeches”

Eighner, Lars: “On Dumpster Diving”

Heinrichs, Jay – Thank You for Arguing

Lopate: “Writing Personal Essays: On the Necessity of Turning Oneself Into a Character”

Mairs, Nancy: “On Being a Cripple”

McMurtry: “Kill ‘Em! Crush ‘Em! Eat ‘Em Raw”

Rauch: “In Defense of Prejudice”

**Additional Lessons:**

- Close Reading and Annotation
- Tone and Tone Vocabulary (2)
- The Rhetorical Matrix
- Review of word phrases and parts of speech
- Coordination and subordination
- Passive and active voice
- Close reading and annotation
- Elaborate analysis of readings
- Analyze and explain the rhetorical strategies apparent in the summer readings.
- Analyze the “keys”: persona, appeals, subject matter and treatment, context, intention, and genre
- Multiple-choice exercises
- Group editing and assessment sessions
- Vocabulary

## **Writing Projects:**

**Analytical Essay:** A rhetorical analysis focusing on one of the summer readings: How does the author generate exigence, the “imperfections marked by urgency”? What is her/his primary audience? What constraints did he/she have to consider? Essay addressing one of the readings;

**In-class Timed Essays** addressing AP prompts and archaic prose.

## **The Personal Narrative**

## **Unit 2 Analyzing Rhetoric – The Foundation of Argument**

**Learning Targets:** Students will understand:

- the 5 traditional canons of rhetoric: Invention: journalist’s questions, Burke’s pentad, syllogism and enthymeme, the topics;
- Arrangement: genres, functional parts; Style: diction, connotation and denotation, Latinate and Anglo Saxon diction, sentence structure and syntax, loose vs. periodic sentences, cohesion, schemes and tropes, parallelism;
- Memory and Delivery; constraints due to specific audiences;
- the rhetorical transaction;
- Aristotelian appeals: logos, pathos and ethos;
- effective argument
- enthymemes/warrants and their relationship to specific audiences – assumptions based on target audience;
- style: schemes and tropes; cohesion and rhythm
- how form can relate to function
- means of communication: verbal and written – contrasting texts meant to be read with texts meant to be heard;
- how to annotate their own texts
- speech genre: forensic, epideictic, deliberative;
- The authorial voice: “effective” vs. “ineffective” writing – the rant.

## **Readings:**

Barton: “The Art and Power of Oratory in Julius Caesar”: HO

Churchill: "Some People Push Back: On the Justice of Roosting Chickens" HO

Obama: “Inaugural Address”: HO

Orwell: “A Hanging”: HO

Orwell: “Politics and the English Language”: NR pp. 581-591

Postman: “Graduation Speech”: HO

Shakespeare: Julius Caesar

Traversi: “A Clash of Aims: The Use and Abuse of Oratory by Brutus and Antony”:

**Additional Lessons:**

- Adjusting syntax for cohesion
- Loose and periodic sentences
- Continue with parallel structure
- Developing tone and establishing credible voice in conveying arguments
- Toulmin and Rogerian Argument
- Précis and Response In-class activities:
- Analyzing appeals to logos, pathos and ethos and how these appeals interact in the development of meaningful texts – the credibility of the rhetor;
- Becoming critical readers;
- Exploring differences in rhetorical strategies used in pieces meant to be heard from those meant to be read;
- Multiple-choice exercises
- Group editing and assessment sessions
- Vocabulary
- Essay: analysis of speech or soliloquy from Julius Caesar;
- Columnist Project (explained above) – continues into Unit 3
- In-class essays; responding to AP prompts;
- Mid-term Current Issue or Election Project (explained above)

**Unit 3: Rhetoric and Effective Writing Learning Goals Students will understand:**

- the writing process;
- writing as a rhetorical process;
- how to incorporate external sources;
- how to synthesize diverse sources;
- how to develop their own argument inspired by sources
- logical fallacies
- how to analyze visual sources, seeing beyond the apparent
- revision processes and strategies;
- how to determine their own learning style as a means to improving vocabulary

**Suggested Readings:**

August: “Real Men Don’t; Anti-Male Bias in English:

Cross: “Propaganda: How Not to be Bamboozled”:

Didion: “At the Dam”

Fussel: “Thank God for the Atomic Bomb”

Gould: “Women’s Brains”

Holsendolph: “Grappling with the Gender Disparity Issue”

Theroux: “Being a Man”

- Vocabulary
- Continue analyzing different rhetorical approaches to common themes
- Peer editing and revision
- Grappling with archaic prose
- Picture analysis—magazine ads, billboard ads, political ads

**Projects:**

- AP Sample Synthesis Prompt
- Exposition Research essay—MLA
- Argumentative Essay—APA
- Gender / Feminism synthesis essay

**Unit 4: Reading, Research and Rhetoric Learning Goals Students will understand:**

- grammar: functionality of sentence structures and syntax;
- satire – authorial appeals through humor;
- context clues as a means to interpret archaic prose;
- reader response;
- more about constraints surrounding audience;
- multiple-choice strategies;
- research and citation strategies;
- how to discover credible sources;
- how to conduct “conversations” with diverse sources, how to transcend “read and regurgitate”

**Suggested Readings:**

- Research Paper Steps and Organization
- Vocabulary Lists In-class activities:
- Library: gathering information and ideas from diverse sources
- Group discussions of topics and theses; determining viability of research topic
- Group peer reviews of preliminary drafts of research paper
- Writers’ workshops: selected exercises and discussions from Rhetorical Grammar
- Multiple-choice practice: retake the test with your group, justifying your answers
- Group multiple-choice sessions: discovering and correcting your own mistakes Writing Projects:
- AP Prompts
- Research Paper: preliminary drafts of researched argumentative or expository paper synthesizing diverse sources

## **Unit 5 Making Connections** – Readers and Writers; Writers and Readers Learning Goals

Students will understand:

- the concept of semiotics and effective communication;
- the power of punctuation
- how to achieve success on the English” and “Reading” sections of the ACT
- the concept of memory – using shared experience as a tool;
- reasoning;
- meanings behind images, the power of the photograph and photographer
- rhetorical strategies applying to grammar and syntax—parallel structures;
- multiple-choice stems and the creation of multiple-choice questions
- test expectations
- more about archaic prose

### **Suggested Readings:**

Langer: “Language and Thought”:

Plato: “The Allegory of the Cave”:

Sontag: “In Plato’s Cave”

- Multiple-choice strategies
- Multiple-choice: Common Stems

### **In-class activities:**

- Final peer editing sessions prior to research paper final draft submission
- Group discussions analyzing comparing language usage in readings/deconstructing prompts from past exams
- Vocabulary
- Writers workshops: selected exercises and discussions from Rhetorical Grammar
- AP test preparation: complete sample test
- Group multiple-choice sessions: discovering your own mistakes
- SAT English/Reading test preparation including practice “English” and “Reading” exams
- Writing Projects:
  - Research Paper Final Draft
  - Photography Synthesis Essay
  - Complete Practice Exam
  - AP Prompts: archaic prose
  - Student-choice essay analysis/presentation

**Unit 6 — Novels** Rhetoric and Narrative Learning Goals: Students will understand:

- Literary techniques in novels;
- effectiveness of narrative styles;
- how to discover meaning of the piece as a whole in novels – the power of themes;
- the expectations of AP English Literature and Composition.
- Write an analysis of Native Son
- Write an expository research essay on Grapes of Wrath
- Both essays will adhere to the writing process—planning, revising, drafting, teacher feedback, self edit, peer edit, and final draft.

**Novels:**

- Grapes of Wrath
- Native Son
- Bridge to AP English Literature and Composition.