

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition

Course Description

While this course will help provide students with the tools they need to take the AP English Literature exam, its larger goal is to prepare them for the demands of the longer and more complex reading tasks they will face in the future: how to do a close reading of a passage as well as determine what the major issues are in literary works as a whole; how to articulate the levels of meaning in poems ranging from Elizabethan sonnets to twenty-first century poems; and, especially important to us as teachers, how to dissect literature without taking the life and enjoyment out of it. We will study poetry and such works as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and/or Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Voltaire's *Candide*, and Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

AP Literature is the natural evolution from English 11, or an equivalent American literature course. Upon entering this course, students should be familiar with the following works: Shakespearean dramas including *Macbeth*; *The Great Gatsby*; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; a novel by Charles Dickens; and British and American poetry. Students should also have experience writing an extended persuasive research paper.

Students will learn strategies for tackling a variety of writing assignments. We expect students to be reading every night, from literature as well as selected criticism and research. Students will be expected to annotate all reading assignments as we move from guided to independent reading. Student writing will reflect an understanding of thematic connections and recognition of archetypal patterns, as well as how the evolution of content and style in literature reflects the human condition. Finally, to track their progress, we encourage students to maintain a critical journal of their reading and writing.

Answers to frequently asked questions:

- **Must I take AP 11 (Language and Composition) to be eligible for AP 12?**

AP Language is not a prerequisite for AP Literature; however, students should have completed an equivalent American Literature course. Students should also be familiar with persuasive writing and formal extended literary analysis.

- **Is the AP Exam required?**

All students enrolled in AP Literature are required to take the AP Literature exam in May; however, this exam is not part of a student's grade for the course. Instruction continues after the AP Exam, and students are required to complete a local final.

- **How does AP Literature differ from AP Language?**

Both courses require significant writing and both study literature. The focus of AP Language is primarily on the rhetorical modes, whereas the focus of AP Literature is on literary exegesis.

To learn more

Visit the BHS website (<http://www.bcsd.org/webpages/chall/index.cfm>) or contact Mrs. Hall or Ms. Satter.