Course Description

This course is a year-long course designed to help students become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and to become skilled writers who can compose for a variety of purposes. Through reading and writing in this course, students should become aware of the interactions among a writer’s purpose, audience expectations, and subjects, as well as the way generic conventions of the language contribute to effective writing. Students are expected to process, analyze, synthesize, and communicate orally and in writing. The course focuses on grammar and punctuation review, syntactical strategies, literary elements, rhetorical devices and strategies, diction and style, paragraph structures and development, literary analysis, and AP exam practice. As students progress through the course, they will become aware of their own composition process through self-assessment and evaluations by peers and the instructor. These skills will allow students to read critically and write effectively in different modes in the college classroom and beyond. This course prepares students to take the AP examination in Language and Composition in May of their junior year.

Course Goals and Student Expectations

Upon completion of the Language and Composition course, students should be able to:

- analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques;
- apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing;
- create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience;
- write for a variety of purposes;
- produce expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
- demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writings;
- demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources;
- move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research; drafting, revising, editing, and review;
- write thoughtfully about their own process of composition;
- revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience.
• analyze image as text; and
• evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

Course Content by Unit

The course is organized around this essential question: “What is the American Dream?” To investigate that question, the course is divided into the following outlined units. Each unit requires students to read assigned selections that address some aspect of the essential question, to write responses (long, short, formal, informal) to teacher-selected prompts/questions; to develop and use a wide-ranging vocabulary; to employ the rules governing writing conventions, grammar, and punctuation at all times; to contribute to class discussions; and in essence, to be independent learners. Each unit also includes activities in critical analysis and thinking skills and preparation for the AP exam. The readings listed are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Unit 1: Introduction/Active Reading/Uses of Language

Readings: Chapter 1 – “Active Reading” – Writer’s Resource
        Introductory Chapter – “What is an Essay?” – Ten on Ten: Major Essayists on Recurring Themes
        “One Man’s Profit is Another Man’s Loss” – Michel deMontaigne
        “One Writer’s Beginnings” – Eudora Welty
        “On Keeping a Notebook” – Joan Didion
        “How To Write Clearly” – Edward Thompson
        “The Stuff that Dreams are Made Of” – Sharon Begley

Independent Reading: choice from suggested reading list each grading period

Unit 2: The Dream of Community

Readings: The Crucible – Arthur Miller
        The Scarlet Letter – Nathaniel Hawthorne
        “The Whistle” – Benjamin Franklin
        excerpts from Bradford, Bradstreet, Rowlandson, Smith
        essays on Nathaniel Hawthorne
        “The Minister’s Black Veil” – Nathaniel Hawthorne
        “Tragedy and the Common Man” – Arthur Miller
        “Fame” – Arthur Miller
        “We Aren’t Superstitious” – Stephen Vincent Benet
        “Testaments Betrayed” – Milan Kundera
        “Moments of Being” – Virginia Woolf
        “Self-Reliance” and “Nature” – Ralph Waldo Emerson
        “Walden” – Henry David Thoreau
        “Democracy” – E. B. White
        “Is America Falling Apart?” – Anthony Burgess
        “The Common Life” – Scott Randall Sanders
        “On Photography” – Susan Sontag

Independent Reading: choice from suggested reading list each grading period
Unit 3: Dream of Freedom

Readings: The Narrative of the Life and Times of Frederick Douglass
“The Declaration of Independence” – Thomas Jefferson
“Second Inaugural Address” – Abraham Lincoln
“Declaration of Sentiments and Resolution” – Elizabeth Cady Stanton
“The Gettysburg Address” – Abraham Lincoln
“Slavery and Brutality” – John Hope Franklin
“No Compromise with Slavery” – William Lloyd Garrison
“The Tyranny of the Majority” – Lani Guinier

excerpts from Paine, Franklin, Henry

Independent Reading: choice from suggested reading list each grading period

Unit 4: Dream of Success/Abundance

Readings: “All My Sons” – Arthur Miller
“Raisin in the Sun” – Lorraine Hansberry
The Great Gatsby – F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Grapes of Wrath – John Steinbeck
“What are People For?” – Walter Berr
“Development of a Writer” – George Eliot
“What want of Money” – George Hazlitt
“Silent Spring” – Rachel Carson
“What Are People For?” – Wendell Berry

Independent Reading: A Hope in the Unseen

Unit 5: Dream of Equality

Readings: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” – Martin Luther King, Jr.
“On Civil Disobedience” – Henry David Thoreau
“On Non-violent Resistance” – Gandhi
“A Vindication of the Rights of Women” – Mary Wollstonecroft
“Shooting an Elephant” – George Orwell
“Shakespeare’s Sister” – Virginia Woolf
“Graduation” – Maya Angelou

Unit 6: Dreams Deferred

Readings: Ethan Frome – Edith Wharton
As I Lay Dying – William Faulkner
“The Wasteland” – T. S. Eliot
“9/11/01: The Skyscraper and the Airplane” – Adam Goodheart
“How it Feels to be Colored Me” – Zora Neale Huston
“The Recoloring of Campus Life” – Shelby Steele
“Hoop Roots” – John Edger Wideman
“Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self” – Alice Walker
“Black Men and Public Space” – Brent Staples
“On Dumpster Diving” – Lars Eighner
“A Modest Proposal” – Jonathan Swift
George Orwell’s essay on Gandhi

Independent Reading:

**Unit 7: Research/Conclusion**

**Student Evaluation/Assessment**

Students’ grades are based on an accumulated-points system. Each graded assignment or activity is assigned a certain number of points based on its complexity. Very few grades are given during the class; students are mostly assessed on major assignments such as out-of-class essays, timed writings, Socratic seminars, grammar exercise, annotated readings, practice on multiple choice questions based on reading passages, and informal writings. All writing within the course is graded using the PSSA rubric, the AP scoring rubric, and various rubrics developed by the instructor. AP courses are weighted courses. Students receive weighted credit only if the grade is an “A” or a “B.” If an “A” normally yields four points in a non-AP course, an “A” in an AP course yields five points. This ultimately affects the student QPA calculation.

**Primary Course Materials**

_**Literature: The Reader’s Choice, Fifth Course**_*

*Writer’s Resource*

*Norton Reader*

*Writing with a Purpose, 14th Edition*

*The Crucible*

*The Scarlet Letter*

**Supplemental Materials and Suggested Reading List**

- Hope in the Unseen by Ron Susskind
- Farewell to Arms; For Whom the Bell Tolls, Snows of Kilimanjaro by Ernest Hemingway
- Their Eyes are Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
- Our Town; The Skin of our Teeth by Thornton Wilder
- A Separate Peace by John Knowles
- Moby Dick; Billy Budd by Herman Melville
- All My Sons by Arthur Miller
- The Piano Lesson by August Wilson
- As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
- The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin
- Anthem, Fountainhead, Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand
- McTeague by Frank Norris
- Turn of the Screw; Daisy Miller by Henry Miller
- The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane
- Catch 22 by Joseph Heller
- Main Street by Sinclair Lewis
- House of Seven Gables by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- One Flew over the Cuckoo Nest by Ken Kesey
- The Jungle by Upton Sinclair
- Sula by Tony Morrison
- Native Son by Richard Wright
- Look Homeward, Angel by Thomas Wolfe
- Age of Innocence, House of Mirth by Edith Wharton
- Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut
- Uncle Tom’s Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
- Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison